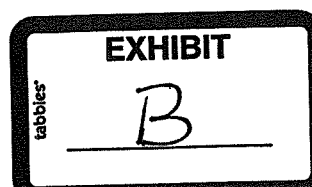


**AFFIDAVIT OF MARK A. SMITH**

**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
COUNTY OF HINDS**

Personally came and appeared before me, the undersigned authority in and for the said County and State, within my jurisdiction, the within named **Mark A. Smith**, who, having been duly sworn by me, states on oath the following:

1. My name is Mark A. Smith.
2. I have a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) from William Carey College and a Master of Business Administrator (MBA) from Mississippi College.
3. I have over 28 years of experience in the United States Army and the Mississippi National Guard.
4. In April 2003, the Adjutant General of the Mississippi National Guard, Major General Harold A. Cross, appointed me Director of Logistics of the Mississippi National Guard, a position in which I served until my retirement in 2006. During this assignment I managed over 955 soldiers, civilians, and contractors assigned throughout the state of Mississippi. I was also responsible for all logistics operations prior to, during, and after Hurricane Katrina for Mississippi. Prior to this assignment I served as a Battalion Commander and Deputy Brigade Commander in Mississippi and Fort Hood Texas. During a six month period during this time I served in both capacities. These duties included military pay, travel, resource management, training, personnel recruitment and retention, deployments, personnel actions, preparing for combat operations, and other duties as assigned. While serving as the Deputy Brigade Commander, 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Group, Fort Hood TX, I was responsible for soldiers assigned to Fort Hood, TX, Fort Bliss, TX, Fort Carson, CO, Fort Sill, OK, and supporting soldiers deployed to Iraq and other locations around the world.



5. During my military career, which I began as a Private E-1 and ended as a Colonel O-6, I served in various leadership assignments in peace time and war time.

6. Beginning in April 2006, I served as Deputy Administrator of Operations of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) and in 2008 was promoted to Deputy Executive Director of MDHS.

7. Since Lori Woodruff's retirement from the MDHS-Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) on July 1, 2012, I have served as interim Deputy Administrator of MDHS-DFCS. In that capacity I am responsible for the management and oversight of DFCS and have been actively engaged in the reform efforts at DFCS. I am primarily dedicated to the management and oversight of DFCS. The only other management responsibilities I have relate to personnel and contracts. While some of these responsibilities relate to other divisions of MDHS, much of the work in personnel and contracts concerns DFCS. A majority of these actions require review and approval by the Deputy Administrator of MDHS-DFCS and as a result, the amount of time required to process these matters has been reduced.

8. As interim Deputy Administrator of MDHS-DFCS, I have placed special focus on the areas of the state described in the MSA as the "Carve Out Counties." The Carve Out Counties consist of Hancock, Harrison, Hinds, and Jackson counties. These counties face unique challenges including judicial issues and large populations of children in custody compared to other areas of the state. The Carve Out counties have a history of staffing deficits and elevated caseworker and supervisor turnover.

9. In an effort to improve recruitment and retention in the Carve Out Counties, in August 2011, DFCS requested that the Mississippi State Personnel Board (SPB), approve a recruitment flex salary increase for these counties. In September 2011, SPB granted the

recruitment flex, resulting in a 15% salary increase for caseworkers and supervisors in all the carve out counties. While the salary increase helped result in some hires, there were still retention issues.

10. In November 2012, DFCS initiated a management strategy to help address understaffing and other issues in the Carve Out Counties. This strategy involved high level managers being deployed to each of the Carve Out Counties. These management teams help to supplement, not replace, the existing management structure and focus on helping staff make foundational improvements in core practice areas such as caseworker visits with children and parents, timely initiation and completion of maltreatment investigations, and investigation quality.

11. In an effort to increase recruitment of staff in the Carve Out Counties, as well as statewide, DFCS streamlined the hiring process. A protocol was implemented to reduce the time required to process applications. Meetings are conducted several times each week to review hiring packets in an effort to remove any obstacles. The three employees working in the DFCS Personnel Section have reduced the time it takes to process applications by more closely tracking all agency and Mississippi State Personnel Board (SPB) processes and taking a proactive position in resolving problems. If an application is identified to have issues that prevent the timely hiring of an applicant, I am contacted to assist in removing the obstacle. I have also instructed other agency divisions, Human Resources and Budgets and Accounting, to place emphasis on all DFCS applications by processing them ahead of all other divisions.

12. To increase staffing as quickly as possible in the Carve Out Counties, DFCS management teams coordinated with the counties to review applications and assist in conducting interviews. This process was initially spearheaded by the Director of Human Resources in Hinds

County. After he contacted applicants for Hinds County and set up interviews, a more deliberate role was taken by the management team. This team coached the interviewers and established questions to ask during the interview process. The management team continued to coach and mentor supervisors until all qualified applicants were interviewed and selected or rejected. The management team has now taken a mentor's role with new employees and supervisors to support the process. The Human Resources Director has moved his operations to Harrison and Hancock Counties to repeat the process. Simultaneously, DFCS and support staff from Human Resources have attended job fairs and followed up on recruitment leads. This aggressive coordinated effort has been very effective in the hiring process in each of the carve out counties.

13. The DFCS Training Unit has coordinated pre-service training dates so the newly hired workers can complete their training soon after hire.

14. As a result of the focused efforts to recruit caseworkers and supervisors, Hinds County made substantial gains in hiring. Recruitment was more difficult in the coastal Carve Out Counties as there are housing shortages post-hurricane and more competition from other social work employers who offer higher salaries than DFCS.

15. In an effort to improve the chances of recruiting in the coastal Carve Out Counties, in December 2012, MDHS-DFCS requested that the Mississippi State Personnel Board (SPB) approve an additional increase in salaries for the caseworkers, supervisors, and regional directors in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson counties. On January 17, 2013, SPB granted that request, resulting in a 20% salary increase for those employed in Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson counties. This increase is in addition to the 15% recruitment flex workers and supervisors in those counties already had.

16. The *Olivia Y* Period 3 Implementation Plan, requires that by the end of Period 3 (July 5, 2013), DFCS must assign a minimum of 16 full time caseworkers to Hancock County, 42 to Harrison County, 50 to Hinds County, and 34 to Jackson County.

17. As a result of the efforts to streamline the hiring process and accelerate worker recruitment, presently there are 15 full time caseworkers assigned to Hancock County and 5 more applicants are in the final approval process. Harrison County currently has 53 full time caseworkers and 8 applicants in the final approval process. Hinds County currently has 55 caseworkers and 6 applications in the final approval process. Jackson County currently has 43 caseworkers and 4 applications in the final approval process.

18. The coastal counties of Jackson, Hancock, and Harrison sustained major damage in Hurricane Katrina. Hancock County's office was completely destroyed along with homes and many other buildings that housed governmental agencies. As a result, the Hancock County office employees, as well as those of other governmental agencies, worked out of trailers until the offices could be rebuilt by the Hancock County Board of Supervisors. It is anticipated that the Hancock County office of DFCS will move into a new permanent building in April 2013.

19. With regard to statewide staffing, between the time I began working as interim Deputy Administrator of MDHS-DFCS, on July 6, 2012 and February 8, 2013, DFCS has a net gain of 56 caseworkers.

20. A full Workforce Development Plan is being developed and, with regard to the Carve Out Counties, the Plan is being further refined. DFCS provided a draft of this document to the Monitor on January 1, 2013 for her feedback and comments to help better ensure that the Plan meets her expectations.

21. The matters set forth herein are based on my personal knowledge as well as my review of records kept in the ordinary course of business.

22. I declare under penalty of perjury to the best of my knowledge that the forgoing is true and correct.

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NOT, this the 12 day of February, 2013.

  
MARK A. SMITH

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME, this the 12 day of February, 2013.

  
NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires:

3-6-14

